

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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SUBJECT: INITIAL REACTION TO CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ACTION ON SO-CALLED
KOCK AMENDMENT

REF: MONTEVIDEO 3388 (NOTAL) (DTG 111202Z SEP 76)

1. SUMMARY: INITIAL URUGUAYAN REACTION TO SUBJECT AMENDMENT
HAS BEEN NEGATIVE AS EXPECTED. SUB-SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
SAID BILL, IF ENACTED INTO LAW, WOULD HAVE "SEVERE REPERCUSSIONS"
ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, ANOTHER HIGH FONMINISTRY OFFICIAL TERMED
CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ACTION "GROSS INTERVENTION IN URUGUAYAN
INTERNAL AFFAIRS." MINDEFENSE SAID EMPHATICALLY HE WANTED
SO-CALLED KOCH AMENDMENT TO BECOME LAW BECAUSE SUSPENSION
OF US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO URUGUAY WOULD STIFFEN THEIR BACKS
TO GO IT ALONE WITHOUT THEIR FRIENDS, AND WOULD INTENSIFY COOPERATION
ON POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND ANTI-SUBVERSIVE MATTERS AMONG COUNTRIES
OF THE SOUTHERN CONE, PARTICULARLY CHILE, ARGENTINA AND URUGUAY.

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END SUMMARY.

2. AT SEVERAL RECEPTIONS AT THE END OF LAST WEEK, I WAS APPROACHED DIRECTLY, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE SO-CALLED KOCH AMENDMENT INTENDED TO TERMINATE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO URUGUAY FOR FY-77, BY MINDEFENSE RAVENNA, SUB-SECRETARY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MICHELIN, AND AMBASSADOR ALVAREZ, DIRECTOR OF THE FONMINISTRY'S BUREAU OF FOREIGN POLICY. IN RESPONSE TO THEIR QUESTIONS, I CLARIFIED THE LEGISLATIVE STATUS OF THE BILL AND POINTED OUT TO THEM THE STEPS THAT

REMAINED TO BE TAKEN.

3. REACTIONS WERE AS WE HAD ANTICIPATED AND AS WERE COMMUNICATED TO THE AMBASSADOR BY THE FONMINISTER PRIOR TO CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ACTION (REFTEL). MICHELIN, REFLECTING PHILOSOPHICALLY ON THE EVOLUTION OF THE SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENT IN URUGUAY AND THE GOVERNMENT'S SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS TO ELIMINATE IT, SAID FLATLY THAT THE SUSPENSION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO URUGUAY WOULD HAVE "SEVERE REPERCUSSIONS" ON OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. AMBASSADOR ALVAREZ, WHO HAS BEEN THE MOST OUTSPOKEN ON THIS SUBJECT, WAS SOMEWHAT LESS OUTRAGED THAN HE HAD BEEN ON SEPTEMBER 16 WITH ANOTHER EMBASSY OFFICER, BUT SAID THAT THE ACTION WOULD CONSTITUTE A "GROSS INTERVENTION IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF URUGUAY", AND COULD IN NO WAY BE JUSTIFIED UNDER ANY PROVISION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW OR OTHER INTERNATIONAL JURIDICAL BASIS.

4. MINDEFENSE RAVENNA COMMENTED AT SOME LENGTH WITH RESPECT TO THIS ACTION. AFTER A LONG COMMENTARY ON US FOREIGN POLICY IN GENERAL, HE TOLD ME FORCEFULLY THAT HE WANTED THE KOCH AMENDMENT TO BECOME LAW BECAUSE THAT FACT ALONE WOULD SERVE TO INDICATE TO THE GOU THAT THE THREAT IT FACED WAS NOT UNDERSTOOD AND THAT THE IMPROVEMENT IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN URUGUAY HAD NOT BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. COMMENTING FURTHER ON WHAT HE HOPED THE BILL WOULD BE ENACTED, RAVENNA SAID THIS WOULD BE A CLEAR INDICATION TO URUGUAY THAT IT WOULD HAVE TO GO IT ALONE. THE SUSPENSION OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO URUGUAY, HE SAID, WOULD ALSO PROVIDE A CLEAR SIGNAL TO OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE SOUTHERN CONE THAT THEIR PROBLEMS WERE NOT UNDERSTOOD EITHER. THE RESULT WOULD BE, HE SAID, A STRENGTHENING OF THEIR BELIEF IN THEMSELVES, THE JUSTICE OF THEIR POSITION, AND FURTHER COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION ON LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND ANTI-SUBVERSIVE ISSUES AMONG COUNTRIES OF THE SOUTHERN CONE, PARTICULARLY CHILE, ARGENTINA AND URUGUAY.

5. THE DEFATTACHE AND OFFICERS OF THE MILITARY GROUP HAVE RECEIVED SIMILAR COMMENTS FROM THEIR CONTACTS. MILITARY OFFICERS WITH WHOM THEY HAVE SPOKEN NOT ONLY HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR RESENTMENT WITH RESPECT TO CONFERENCE COMMITTEE ACTION, BUT EQUALLY IMPORTANTLY ALSO HAVE ASKED ABOUT THE EFFECT OF

THE LEGISLATION ON PRIOR YEAR COMMITMENTS TO URUGUAY.

6. COMMENT: THE INITIAL URUGUAYAN REACTION AS REPORTED
HEREIN IS NOT UNEXPECTED. THEY BELIEVE THEY HAVE BEEN SINGLED
OUT FOR "SPECIAL TREATMENT" ON A SELECTIVE BASIS DESPITE THEIR
VIEW THAT HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES ARE IMPROVING HERE AND ARE FAR
MORE SERIOUS IN SOME OTHER COUNTRIES. IF THE PROVISION TO
TERMINATE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO URUGUAY IN FY-77 DOES BECOME
LAW, THEN WE DO EXPECT THAT OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS WILL BE
AFFECTED TOGETHER WITH URUGUAY'S PASS SUPPORTATIVE ASSOCIATION
WITH US ON A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT ISSUES IN MULTILATERAL FORUMS.
MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, HOWEVER, MINDEFENSE RAVENNA'S COMMENTS
SHOULD NOT BE OVERLOOKED, BECAUSE THEY SIGNAL AN INTENSIFICATION
OF COOPERATION AND COLLABORATION AMONG THOSE COUNTRIES WHO
BELIEVE THEMSELVES MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO INTERNAL SECURITY THREATS.
THE CLEAR IMPLICATION FROM RAVENNA'S COMMENTS IS THAT WHAT HE
CALLED "UNILATERAL SANCTIONS" WILL PUSH THEM FURTHER IN
THIS DIRECTION.
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